

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0926

August 20, 2020

Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

As federal, state, and local leaders in South Florida, we write to you today to inquire upon the status of Florida's contact tracing workforce. As we await the results of Phase Three trials of multiple vaccine candidates, the most effective tool to combat the spread of the coronavirus is widespread, rapid testing and extensive contact tracing.

As you know, the state of Florida has received over \$492 million in federal funding for testing and tracing efforts. According to public health experts from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), given the current level of spread of the coronavirus in our community, Florida will need at least 35,000 contact tracers. Miami-Dade County alone requires over 9,700 contact tracers to contain the spread, but the latest estimates indicate that the county has hired 350. Additionally, Monroe County needs over 110 contact tracers, based on the current case counts. These numbers are directly tied to the prevalence of COVID-19 in our communities, with greater community spread necessitating more tracers - yet another reason to put in place the measures to get community spread under control.

Contact tracing is a thorough process that requires each tracer to spend significant time speaking with each confirmed case, subsequent calls with each case's contact, and regular follow-up with every confirmed case and those who were potentially exposed. Through robust contact tracing, we can properly identify and comfortably quarantine those who have been exposed to the virus, breaking lines of transmission and slowing the spread of this deadly disease.

Contact tracing also plays a key economic role. With effective contact tracing, localities know which areas and industries are contributing to the spread of the virus and can target interventions and mitigation strategies more precisely. However, without this knowledge, broader and more economically devastating options are necessitated.

We have heard troubling accounts from our constituents that they have not received any contact tracing calls, despite being exposed to the virus. We ask that you provide us with an update as to the status of that funding, how much has been allocated to Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, and what the current goals are to expand contact tracing to reach more of our constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Debbie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

/s/
Mayor Heather Carruthers
Monroe County

/s/
Mayor Otis Wallace
City of Florida City

/s/
Mayor Bruce Halle
City of Layton

/s/
Mayor Steven Losner
City of Homestead

/s/
Mayor Teri Johnston
City of Key West

/s/
Mayor Mike Forster
Islamorada, Village of Islands